

IN SENATE
OF
THE UNITED STATES,

JANUARY 27, 1818.

The committee on the public lands, to whom was referred a resolution directing "that a Commissioner of the General Land Office furnish each soldier who may receive a patent for military bounty land, a description of the quality of his lot, as minuted in the field-notes of the surveyor," report, that on examining the laws which provide for the surveying of the public lands, it appears to be made the duty of every surveyor to note and report the mines, salt springs and mill seats, that come within his knowledge, the "water courses over which the line he runs shall pass, and also, the quality of the lands."

The military bounty lands, as well as the other public lands, are surveyed into sections of one mile square, the interior or divisional lines for separating the quarter sections are not actually run. Hence the notes of the surveyor are useful only in forming an opinion of the general quality of the land surveyed. They apply to the ground over which he has passed in surveying the exterior lines of the sections; and to other objects which have come within his knowledge.

In a country of a diversified soil, when the description of the quality of land on the out boundaries shall be given for a description of the *tract*, it will be found frequently to be incorrect; and the chances for inaccuracy are multiplied in the proportion that the tracts to be described are divided or reduced in quantity. In the case proposed where the quality of each lot, or quarter section is to be given, when only two sides of that lot have been viewed by the surveyor, it must be evident that frequent error may be committed.

It is required of the Land Office to give the particular character of each small tract, from information only partial, and in its nature general.

It is respectfully submitted by the committee whether it be not improper to require the description proposed to be made, should be in an official shape, when the office is not possessed of the necessary means to insure accuracy in the description required to be made.

The committee report the resolution without amendment, being of opinion it ought not pass.